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COVID-19: Addressing the risk

A BESPOKE APPROACH FOR THE RESTAURANT SECTOR

A bespoke approach for the Restaurant Sector

INTRODUCTION

Restaurants been hugely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

- Opening hours have been subjected to restrictions and curfews.
- Spending patterns of consumers have shifted, with disposable income being used for essential goods and services, rather than social or luxury expenses.
- Many people are avoiding populated places, such as restaurants, for fear of catching COVID-19.

To manage the impact of the pandemic in the restaurant sector and to ensure the viability of the businesses in the industry, restaurant owners need to ensure that they manage the threat as effectively as possible and to communicate their actions to make people feel safe.

- Both employees and customers are at risk of spreading the COVID-19 virus.
- Both employees and customers are at risk of catching COVID-19.
- It is in the best interest of the restaurant owner to protect both employees and customers as far as reasonably possible.

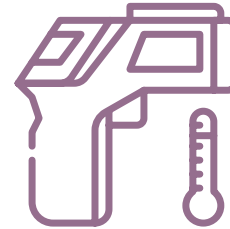
- Managing the safety compliance of employees can be achieved through an effective employer/employee relationship.

The nature of success for this sector is that restaurants are dependent on the goodwill of customers for continued support.

Therefore, having effective COVID-19 safety precautions in place can result in customers feeling more comfortable.



LOOKING AFTER YOUR EMPLOYEES



To ensure the correct low-risk behaviour of employees, the following needs to be implemented and monitored:

- COVID-19 screening should be done on all employees at the start of their shifts.
- Employees with possible COVID-19 signs should not be allowed to enter the workplace, and managed in line with the restaurant's Covid screening procedure..
- Employees should always wear their masks correctly at all times, except when eating or drinking.
- Employee break areas are often places where the virus is spread. There should therefore be social distancing of 1.5 meters at all times, no over-crowding of the area, good ventilation, regular sanitisation of equipment, utensils, tables & chairs and no sharing of items that may enable spread of the virus.
- Employees should have free and full access to hand sanitizer and preferably have it on them at all times.
- Employees should sanitize their hands after every contact interaction that they have with customers, including when retrieving menus, managing payments, clearing the tables of used utensils or food.
- Employee adherence to these safety measures should be monitored and enforced, if necessary.
- Suppliers to the restaurant must wear masks at all times.
- The restaurant should appoint a Covid-19 Compliance Officer to accept the responsibility of managing these safety and compliance aspects.
- Repeated non-compliance by employees should be managed through the disciplinary processes of the entity.
- Employees travelling in taxis, buses, or other shared rides to and from work, need to ensure that they sanitize on entry and exit every time, wear masks at all times, and keep windows open to ensure fresh air flow.
- Employees should be empowered to be able to ensure customer safety compliance e.g. if a customer doesn't have their mask on when walking to the bathroom, an employee should be trained and know that they may approach the customer to remind them to wear their mask, or, alternatively, they should alert the appointed senior employee to the non-compliance - for him/her to address the issue.



APPROACH TOWARDS YOUR CUSTOMERS

In the interest of protecting employees and other customers from becoming infected with Covid-19 and to promote the sustainability of your business, it is important that customer behaviour is also monitored and non-compliances addressed.

Due to the nature of the relationship between customers and your restaurant, the situation needs to be approached with care.

The best way to approach customers that are not following the safety rules would be through a calm and personable approach. Customers should not be humiliated in front of their companions, and discussions should preferably be held in private. The Covid-19 Compliance Officer may not always be the best person to approach customers and the most suitable senior employee should be identified to address non-compliance matters, on a personal level. A practical step is to empower staff to address these issues with customers if possible, and at a minimum empower them to report this to the selected staff member / manager who will address these issues with customers.

Protective measures for customers should include:

- COVID-19 symptom screening on entering the restaurant, and refusal of entry for symptomatic customers.
- Placing posters up at the entrance asking those who have symptoms to please stay away can assist.
- Hand sanitisers should be available at access points and freely available to customers within the restaurant.
- Tables, chairs, table ware such as salt and pepper holders and counters should be sanitized between customer sittings.
- Customers should be offered hand sanitizers after every potential physical contact with employees, such as when providing menus, or managing payment. Card payment machines should also be sanitised between use.
- Customers should always wear facemasks correctly, except when eating and drinking.
- They should be encouraged to always wear masks when engaging with staff, for example when ordering.
- Smoking areas in restaurants add an additional risk of Covid transmission, and smokers should ensure that they sanitize their hands frequently, and replace masks when not smoking. Sharing of cigarettes is not allowed.
- Customers who do not follow the rules should be asked to leave the premises in the best interest of other customers, employees, and the business concerned.